



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Fort Worth District

Media Advisory

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There have been 13 confirmed recreational drownings this year at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes in Texas. July 4th is one of the busiest holidays of the year as hot weather and clear skies lure visitors to the lakes for a day of fun.

Water levels will be high in our lakes and we are concerned that many more may die if they don't take water safety seriously.

Accidents happen and they happen fast. Accidents such as falling from a boat, being hit by a propeller, slipping off a dock while fishing, swimming too far from shore or falling from a rock ledge are the kinds of accidents in which the victim had no intention of going into the water. Inexperienced jet ski operators realize too late that they have no brakes or that they have no steering capability when they are off-throttle. Wearing a life jacket could mean the difference between life and death when a person suddenly finds himself or herself in the water.

Never let small children play around water unsupervised. Put them in properly-fitted Coast Guard approved life jackets to help buy time in case they get into the water. "Floaties" or other inflatables are toys and are not intended to save lives.

Please help us get this water safety message out to your audiences. Any body of water is a potential death trap and anyone planning on enjoying the 4th of July at a lake, river, stream or even a backyard pool, should exercise caution and good common sense.

- Always use the buddy system and swim only in designated areas.
- Always wear a Coast Guard approved flotation device.
- Always use a designated driver if you plan on drinking alcohol.
- Always supervise children playing near any water.

We would also like to remind visitors to Corps lakes that *fireworks are not permitted* on or near the lakes at any time during the year. Fireworks may cause serious personal injury such as severe burns and hearing loss as well as grass fires and other property damage.

Attached is a press release if you prefer to use it.

Corps calls for extra caution during holiday weekend

The July 4th holiday traditionally brings the season's greatest surge of visitors to lakes throughout Texas. Because temperatures are expected to be near the century mark, even more recreationists are expected to converge on area lakes.

"Increased attendance at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes always creates a special need for water safety awareness," Col. Gordon M. Wells, Fort Worth District Engineer, said today.

"We've had 13 confirmed drownings related to recreation at Fort Worth District lakes since the beginning of the year," Wells said, "and all of them were preventable."

Hazardous conditions include temporary lapses in adult supervision of small children, alcohol and drug abuse, reckless operation of personal watercraft, diving from banks into unknown depths, skiing in congested areas, overexertion, swimming in undesignated areas and overcrowding of boats. Wells also cautions boaters to be especially alert since the lakes will be crowded.

Visitors to Corps lakes are also reminded that fireworks are not permitted on or near the lakes at any time during the year. Fireworks may cause serious personal injury such as severe burns and hearing loss as well as grass fires and other property damage.

Wells added that consideration for others and common sense will help ensure a safe and pleasant holiday.